

THE INCOMMUNICABLE NAME

As it might appear premature, at the outset of this chapter, to spell out that Divine Name which some regard as not only incommunicable but unpronounceable, it will be considerate to begin the present investigations by the aid of circumlocution and abbreviation, especially as no inconvenience will be occasioned thereby. The *Tetragrammaton*, or name of four letters (in allusion to the four letters Y H W H), is a technical term frequently employed by scholars, and will here, for a little, serve a useful purpose. Besides employing this term, we can reverently speak of "The Name," or can set down be first letter only, "Y," in the same way as critics are wont to use the Hebrew letter *yod* as the initial of the Divine Name intended. This, understood, we can intelligibly proceed. Our very first sub-division will indicate the serious turn, which this inquiry necessarily takes.

I.—THE NAME SUPPRESSED

A. *The Fact*

It is willingly admitted that the suppression has not been absolute; at least so far as Hebrew and English are concerned. The Name, in its four essential letters, was reverently transcribed by the Hebrew copyist, and therefore was necessarily placed before the eye of the Hebrew reader. The latter, however, was instructed *not to pronounce it*, but to utter instead a less sacred Name—ADONAY or ELOHIM. In this way The Name was not suffered to reach the ear of the listener. To that degree it was suppressed. The Septuagint, or ancient Greek version, made the concealment complete by regularly substituting *Kurios*; as the Vulgate, in like manner, employed *Dominus*; both *Kurios* and *Dominus* having at the same time their own proper service to render as correctly answering to the Hebrew *Adonay*, meaning "Lord." The English versions do nearly the same thing, in rendering The Name as LORD, and occasionally GOD; these terms also having their own rightful office to fill as fitly representing the Hebrew titles *Adonay* and *Elohim* and *El*. So that the *Tetragrammaton* is nearly hidden in our public English versions. Not quite. To those who can note the difference between "LORD" and "Lord" and between "GOD" and "God," and can remember that the former (printed with SMALL CAPITALS) *do* while the latter *do not* stand for The Name—to such an intimation of the difference is conveyed. But although the READER who looks carefully at his book can see the distinction, yet the mere HEARER remains completely in the dark respecting it, inasmuch as there is no difference whatever in sound between "LORD" and "Lord" or "GOD" and "God." It hence follows that in nearly all the occurrences of The Name (some 7,000 throughout the Old Testament) the especial Name of God is absolutely withheld from all who simply hear the Bible read. "Nearly all," for there are about half a dozen instances in the A.V., and a few more in the R.V., in which this concealment does not take place. In other words there are these very few places in which the *Tetragrammaton* appears as "Jehovah"; and although it may be asked, "What are they among so many?" still their presence has an argumentative value. If it was wrong to unveil the *Tetragrammaton* at all, then why do it in these instances? If, on the other hand, it was right to let it be seen in these cases, then why riot in all? With the exceptions explained, however, it remains true to say, that in our public versions the one especial Name of God is suppressed, wholly concealed from the listening ear, almost as completely hidden from the hastening or uncritical eye.

B. *The Immediate Consequences of the Suppression.*

These are—

(I.) Partly *literary*, though more than that. Reference is here made to the confusion into which many things are thrown through this abnormal state of things. "Baal" is "lord" and so is "Adon" (Adonay)—that is unfortunate; but why add to the embarrassment by rendering Y H W H (and Y H, the shorter form) also as "Lord"? Worst of all is the confusion when "Y" and Adonay occur together, as they do many times in the Book of Ezekiel. Inasmuch as to say, "Lord, LORD" for "Adonay Y," was too grotesque and misleading (positively false to the ear), the new device had to

be resorted to of rendering this combination by “Lord GOD”—“GOD” in this case, and not “Lord” at all, standing for The Name. Even Y H (the shorter form) and Y H W H (the full form) of the *Tetragrammaton* coming together,^a caused a dilemma; though in these instances, the acuteness of the trouble compelled the adoption of a partial remedy, and “the LORD JEHOVAH” is the result. “Confusion,” then, is a term not a whit too strong to apply to these varying devices. No wonder that even intelligent and educated people are continually forgetting what they have heard or read concerning so involved a matter.

(ii.) Partly *practical*. Is it too much to assume that The Name has about it something very grand or very gracious, or at least something very mysterious? Whichever conclusion is received, the question arises whether there is not something essentially presumptuous, however little intended, in substituting for it one of the commonest of titles, seeing that there are on earth “lords many,” and the master of the humblest slave is his “lord”? There is surely nothing very grand or gracious or mysterious in that. It is therefore the most natural presumption that the suppression of The Name has entailed on the reader, and especially upon the hearer, irreparable loss.

C. The Reason for the Suppression.

The motive was good—let that be assumed. It was to safeguard the Divine Majesty in the minds of men. It was to prevent the inconsiderate mention of Him before whom seraphs veil their faces—though even so it is very difficult to see how one name should occasion irreverence and another not. Why not, then, leave Him altogether unnamed? Why not fear to allude to Him by any title that could definitely refer to Him? The passages commonly cited as furnishing good reason for the suppression surely cannot mean what is thus attributed to them, since there is a wide distinction between not taking His Name in vain, and not taking His Name into our lips at all, even for prayer or praise. In a word, the motive is respected; but the reverence is regarded as misapplied—the reason given is seen to be invalid.

II.—THE NAME RESTORED.

A. Why?

1. Because its suppression was a mistake. So grave a mistake cannot be corrected too soon. An unwarrantable liberty has been taken; the path of humility is to retrace our steps.

2. Because thereby serious evil may be averted. Men are saying to-day that “Y” was a mere tribal name, and are suggesting that “Y” Himself was but a local deity. As against this, only let The Name be boldly and uniformly printed, and the humblest Sunday School teacher will be able to show the groundlessness of the assertion.

3. Because solid advantage may be counted upon as certain to follow the restoration. Even if the meaning of The Name should not disclose itself, the word itself would gradually gather about it the fitting associations—and that would be a gain; and godly readers would be put on quest—and that would be further gain; and if the true significance of the *Tetragrammaton* should be brought to light, there would be a trained constituency to whom appeal could be made—and that would be a yet greater gain.

A PLAUSIBLE OBJECTION ANSWERED—A plausible argument in favour of leaving The Name veiled, as it is now, may be based upon its concealment by the Septuagint. The plea takes the following form. The Septuagint conceals the *Tetragrammaton* under the common title Kurios, “Lord.” Jesus used that version as it stood, notably in citing Psalm cx. 1.^b Therefore what was good enough for Him should be good enough for us. *Answer First*: Jesus Christ was not a scribe or

^a As in Is. xii. 2; and xxvi. 4.

^b See Mat. xxii 41-45

literary critic His mission was much higher. *Answer Second*: Jesus had to plead his Messiahship at the bar of the Scriptures as then current; and any criticism by Him of the nation's Sacred Documents might have placed a needless obstacle in the people's path. We thus conclude that the objection may and should be set aside as inconclusive, and so fall back on the reasons given why the Divine Name should be suffered uniformly to appear.

B. In What Form?

1. Why not in the form "*Jehovah*"? Is that not euphonious? It is, without question. Is it not widely used? It is, and may still be freely employed to assist through a period of transition. But is it not hallowed and endeared by many a beautiful hymn and many a pious memory? Without doubt; amid therefore it is with reluctance that it is here declined. But why is it not accepted? There it is—familiar, acceptable, ready for adoption. The reason is, that it is too heavily burdened with merited critical condemnation—as modern, as a compromise, as a "mongrel" word, "hybrid," "fantastic," "monstrous." The facts have only to be known to justify this verdict, and to vindicate the propriety of not employing it in a new and independent translation. What are the facts? And first as to age. "The pronunciation *Jehovah* was unknown until 1520, when it was introduced by Galatinus; but was contested by Le Mercier, J. Drusius, and L. Capellus, as against grammatical and historical propriety."^a Next, as to formation. "Erroneously written and pronounced *Jehovah*, which is merely a combination of the sacred *Tetragrammaton* and the vowels in the Hebrew word for Lord, substituted by the Jews for J H V H because they shrank from pronouncing The Name, owing to an old misconception of the two passages, Ex. xx, 7 and Lev. xxiv. 16. . . . To give the name J H V H the vowels of the word for Lord (Heb. Adonai) and pronounce it *Jehovah*, is about as hybrid a combination as it would be to spell the name *Germany* with the vowels in the name *Portugal*—viz., *Gormuna*. The monstrous combination *Jehovah* is not older than about 1520 A.D."^b From this we may gather that the Jewish scribes are not responsible for the "hybrid" combination. They intentionally wrote alien vowels—not for combination with the sacred consonants, but for the purpose of cautioning the Jewish reader to enunciate a totally different word, viz., some other familiar name of the Most High.

2. The form "*Yahweh*" is here adopted as practically the best. The only competing form would be "*Yahweh*," differing, it will be observed, only in a single vowel—"e" for "a" in the first syllable. But even this difference vanishes on examination. It is true that "*Yahweh*" is intended to suggest the derivation of the noun from the simple (*Kal*) conjugation of the verb, and that some scholars take "*Yahweh*" as indicating a formation from the causative (*Hiphil*) conjugation; but, since other scholars (presumably because of the aspirate *h*) regard "*Yahweh*" itself as consistent with a *Kal* formation, thereby leaving us free to accept the spelling "*Yahweh*" without prejudging the question of the precise line of derivation from the admitted root *hâyâh*, we may very well accept the spelling now widely preferred by scholars, and write the name—"Yahweh."

3. The exact *pronunciation* claims a word to itself. "The true pronunciation seems to have been *Yahwè* (or *Iahway*, the initial *I* = *y*, as in *Iachimo*). The final *e* should be pronounced like the French *ê*, or the English *e* in *there*, and the first *h* sounded as an aspirate. The accent should be on the final syllable."^b This statement gives rise to a question of rhythm, which is sure sooner or later to make itself felt. We are so used to the three syllables of the forms "*Jehovah*," with its delightfully varied vowels, that we shrink back dismayed in anticipation of the disturbing effect on our Psalmody of the substitution of *Yahweh* for *Jehóvah*. Our apprehensions may be dismissed. The readjustment is mainly the business of our hymn-writers; and if it should prove literally true, that "new mercies" shall "new songs" demand, which shall enshrine a new accent in a new rhythm, then we may rest

^a "Oxford Gesenius," p. 218.

^b Professor Paul Haupt, General Editor of "The Polychrome Bible," in the Book of Psalms, pp. 163, 164.

assured that sanctified genius and enthusiasm will prove equal to the occasion. The Translator of THE EMPHASISED BIBLE has in his own humble province recast a good many lines in his rendering of “The Psalms” in consideration of the modified rhythm now required. As for the rest, it may with confidence be counted upon that increasing familiarisation and the silent growth of hallowed memories will ultimately render thrice welcome what was at first so strange.

III.—THE NAME EXPLAINED.

1. It certainly appears to be explained in Exodus iii. 14. It does not follow that the statements there made are rightly understood; nor can any compelling reason be assigned why a translator should be ready to expound everything which he has to represent in English. Nevertheless, the correct rendering of the above passage is so connected with the meaning of The Name, that, were it not for special reasons, the attempt now to be made might not have provoked the charge of presumption. As it is, the reproach of rashness cannot easily be escaped.

2. Confessedly it is very discouraging to find the editor of the Polychrome Bible declaring bluntly: “The meaning of J H V H is uncertain.”^a That it *is* uncertain would appear to be the natural conclusion deducible from the varieties of meaning summed up in the Oxford Gesenius under the name “Yahweh.”^b

3. As against this discouragement it may be considered whether the Old Testament does not strongly embolden us to hope that greater success and greater unanimity may yet be attained. Is not a hidden name almost a contradiction in terms? Does not “name” in the Bible very widely imply revelation? *Men’s* names are throughout the Scriptures fraught with significance, enshrining historical incidents, biographical reminiscences, and so forth; and why should the Name of the Ever—Blessed lie an exception to this rule? Does not the Almighty Himself employ this Name of His as though it had in it some self—evident force and fitness to reveal His nature and unfold His ways? His Name is continually adduced by Himself as His reason for what He does and what He commands “For I am Yahweh.” Israel and the nations are placed under discipline, says the Divine Speaker, “that they may know that I am Yahweh.” Is it not probable, then, that His Name was intended to be understood? Thus encouraged, we proceed; only requesting that the exposition which follows may be regarded as—

4. An Individual Opinion respectfully submitted.

- (a) The conclusion formed may be thus expressed The Name itself signifies, “He who becomes”; and the formula^c by which that significance is sustained and which is rendered in the Authorised Version “I am that I am,” expresses the sense, “I will become whatsoever I please”; or, as more exactly indicating the idiom involved, “I will become whatsoever I may become.” We amplify the “may,” and more freely suggest the natural latitude which the idiom claims, by saving “Whatsoever I will, may, or can become.”
- (b) The reasons for this conclusion are two FIRST, that it gives the simplest, most obvious, most direct force to the derivation of The Name itself, as generally admitted. *Yahweh* is almost always regarded as the third person, singular, masculine, imperfect tense, from the root *hawah*, an old form of the root *hayah*. The one meaning of *hayah* is “become.”^d So that the force of Yahweh thus derived, as a verb, would be “He will become”; or, as expressive of use and wont, “He becomes.” Then, passing into use as a noun, it is—“He

^a P.B., Psalms, p. 164. For an encouraging contrast see explanation offered by Dr. A. B. Davidson, quoted, *post*, in the Note on Exo. iii. 14.

^b O.G., 218

^c Exo. iii. 14.

^d O.G., 217

who becomes,” “The Becoming One.” That is precisely how any other Hebrew name would be formed and would yield up its inherent significance. Thus viewed, its human—like simplicity would be its great recommendation. If the Eternal would speak to man so as to be understood, we seem compelled to expect that He will speak after the manner of men. And if after the manner of men He pleases to take and bear a Name, it would seem the very perfection of condescension that His Name should be formed after the manner of men’s names. SECOND, the sense of the formula given above is very simply and idiomatically obtained. The formula itself is *’ehyeh ’asher ’ehyeh*, in which it should be noted that the verb *’ehyeh*, “I will become,” runs forward into a reduplication of itself; for it is that which constitutes the idiom. As a mere repetition, the assertion would be unmeaning. To escape this we must resort to mystery or imagination or—idiom. How if the mystery it—self is imaginary; and where is imagination to end I how is it to be reduced to any trusty significance? Would it not be more humble and childlike to be prepared to find that the All—wise and All—loving is simply addressing us in an idiom of our own? We have many such idiomatic formulae even in English “I will speak what I will speak,” and the like. *Only*, after the manner of our tongue, we avoid the semblance of meaningless repetition by emphasising the auxiliary verb: “I will speak what I *will* speak”—my mind is made up; or “I will speak what I *can, may, must* speak”—according to need and opportunity. Now, in Hebrew, the future (imperfect, or incipient) tense (the one used here) is freely employed to express *mood*; in other words, to convey those nicer shades of thought which in English are conveyed by such helping words as “will,” “can,” “may,” “could,” “would,” “might,” “must.” The only question is whether we can assure ourselves that we are not acting fancifully in resorting to that principle of interpretation in the important statement before us. Have we any examples of such an idiom finding place where, as in Exo. iii. 14, a word is folded back upon itself? As a matter of fact, we have in the Old Testament at least three examples in which the recognition of this simple idiom brings out an excellent sense, and in which the Authorised Version leads the way (followed by the Revised) in so expressing the sense.

EXAMPLE I.—1 Samuel xxiii. 13, A.V. and R.V.: “And they went where so ever they could go.” Heb. “*wayyithhall^eku ba ’asher yithhallaku.*” Freely: “And they wandered where so ever they could, would, or might wander.” The repetition is there, and the idiom, and the clear sense of it.

EXAMPLE II.—2 Samuel xv. 20, A.V. and R.V.: “Seeing I go whither I may.” Heb. “*wu’ani hólék ’al ’asker ’ani hólék.*” Lit.: “And (or seeing) I am going whither I am going.” Again the repetition, again the idiom, again the fit sense thereby conveyed.

EXAMPLE III.—2 Kings viii. 1, A.V. and R.V.: “And sojourn where so ever thou can sojourn.” Heb.: “*w^eguri ba ’asher thaguri.*” In the first passage the auxiliary is “could”; in the second, “may”; in the third, “canst.” Idiom is recognised in all, and through it the meaning is seized and well expressed.

We thus gain all needful countenance for the idiomatic explication of Exo. iii. 14:

“I will become whatsoever I will—may—can—become.”

The only difficulty is to suggest the suitable latitude, without multiplying words and without violating any known characteristic of the Speaker. Perhaps the best word on this momentous occasion is: “what I please,” since we know that the Divine resources are infinite, and that God will please to become to His people only what is wisest and best. Thus viewed, the formula becomes a most gracious promise; the Divine capacity of adaptation to any circumstances any difficulties, any necessities that may arise, becomes a veritable bank of faith to such us love God and keep His commandments. The formula is a promise, the promise is concentrated in a Name The Name is at once a revelation a memorial a pledge. To this Name, God will ever be faithful; of it He will never be ashamed; of it He may ever be truthfully proclaimed and gratefully praised!

This is my name to times age—abiding,
And this my memorial to generation after generation.^a

Praise ye Yah,
For good' is Yahweh
Sing praises to his name,
For it is sweet.^b

Praise Yahweh all ye nations,
Laud him all of ye tribes of men;
For his Loving kindness has prevailed over us,
And the faithfulness of Yahweh is to times age abiding.
Praise ye Yah.^c

5. Whether the foregoing explanation is ever likely to be generally accepted or not, one thing appears to be more and more certain the more the evidence is considered, that the name Yahweh has sonic inherent meaning of great force and graciousness; at the very least a significance of sufficient peculiarity to make it more fitting to be employed on some occasions than on others. This conclusion, which on its own merits will scarcely be denied, invests the matter with a literary interest, which it will be fair not to forget. It may deliver the most open—minded critic from a too ready resort to documentary hypotheses to account for the presence or absence of The Name in or from some verses, sections, and books. The use of previous documents may go some way to account for the appearance and disappearance of that name but internal fitness to be avoided or employed may be an equally feasible explanation. Leaving aside the interesting question whether the sudden appearance of the name Yahweh in combination with Elohim in Genesis ii. may not owe its presence to the tenure of the new section which commences at verse 4, in view of Man's coining upon the scene, there are some examples of the presence and absence of The Name to which any documentary hypothesis would appear to be altogether alien. For instance, is it not indicative of what we may call changed moral atmosphere that the prologue of the Book of Job (chapters I. and ii.) and the epilogue (chapters xxxviii.—xlii.) should be replete with the especially gracious proper name "Y," whereas throughout the whole of the doubting, questioning, arguing portion of the Book The Name should occur only once, chapter xii. 9, and then with uncertain attestation? It appears to be equally indicative of a most delicate sense of fitness, that, whereas the Name is employed on an average nearly once in each of the eight—versed sections of Psalm cxix.—a Psalm pervaded by the atmosphere of sustained communion with Yahweh—the one exception, in which a less sacred divine name is used is the single instance in which the Psalmist's mind comes into contact with the colder air of disloyalty to the Gracious Being whom he, himself delighted to worship:—

“Depart from me ye evil—doers,
That I may observe the commandments of my God.”^d

It is with a feeling of lively satisfaction that the materials for judgment concerning all such peculiarities of sacred usage are now clearly set forth in the pages of THE EMPHASISED BIBLE.

Joseph Bryant Rotherham

^a Exo. iii. 15.

^b Ps. cxxxv. 3.

^c Ps. cxvii. Cp. Jer. xxxii. 27.

^d Ps cxix. 115

DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITE NATIONS

In reviewing the destruction of the nations of Canaan, it is most important to bear in mind the terrible nature of the crimes for which they were exterminated. Their very worship was grossly sensual and revoltingly cruel. In honour of their deities women surrendered their virtue. Their sacred places were brothels. The generative organs were openly represented by disgusting symbols. The peoples had holy (!) prostitutes, male and female, – *ḳēdēshim* and *ḳēdēshoth*. Lustful gods are cruel, and demand to be worshipped with human blood. Hence, to the king–idol Moloch, the Canaanites, with some contiguous nations, immolated their sons and daughters. At such crimes as these nature shudders; and Palestine was fain, in abhorrence, to eject her inhabitants. Who shall say that the Most High has not the right to extinguish such polluters of the earth and contaminators of mankind as these? Doubtless the world has been made permanently the sweeter and the more habitable by reason of the occasional Divine use of the bosom of destruction. Let us remember that there was long waiting before these nations were destroyed.^a Not till their iniquity was “full” did the stroke of vengeance fall. It was doubtless both safe and kind that the extermination was to be made ruthlessly complete. And let us not forget that Joshua’s commission was divine, direct, positive, explicit and repeated; and, therefore no example for generals destitute of such sanction. How far other commanders may volunteer, or be lawfully commissioned, to follow Joshua’s example—is, for us, a question of casuistry into which we are not here called upon to enter. Moreover, Divine Mercy drew a line around the devoted nations, and outside that line peoples might be spared—unless, indeed, the interdict went forth against them;^b while, on the other hand, Divine Equity warned the Hebrews that, if they fell into the same sin, they should receive a like punishment. For their fathers’ sake, indeed, they were not to be utterly annihilated; but short of that, if they would sin, they must suffer. Their land would vomit them forth. We know the sad sequel: they fell into sensual and cruel idol-worship; and God kept His word, as the captivities of Assyria and Babylon attest. We have yet to trace the long and painful story of Israel’s sin and punishment: let us be thankful that we shall also have the privilege of turning over to a brighter leaf and dwelling on glowing prophetic songs of redemption, deliverance and salvation.

So much by way of general statement. If the inquiry be urged whether there is sufficient evidence to justify the sweeping statements made at the outset of this Note, the answer can only be in the affirmative, due allowance being made for the circumstantial character of the testimony. It is just as well that the proof should, in a sense, run between the lines. In fact, it is only when some adequate knowledge is possessed of the really obscene and blood-thirsty nature of idol-worship in Western Asia that the mind is prepared to feel the full force of allusions scattered throughout the Old Testament. Many, indeed, are the allegations against Israel for going unchastely after other gods; but even the needlessly coarse terms of our public versions (in speaking of it as “going a-whoring” after idols) have probably failed to suggest to the majority of even educated minds the awful and undoubted fact that such worship was accompanied by rites (to use the guarded language of the Oxford Gesenius) “sometimes involving actual prostitution.”^c Hence there would appear to be something like a moral necessity to lift a little the veil which hides from view the true character of the worship of the Baals, the Asherahs and the Ashtaroths of Canaan.

As to the worship of the local *Baals* it is attested that “it was debased by repulsive immorality.”^d Further, “when Israel entered Canaan the worship of the Baalim was everywhere present. As it was especially associated with agriculture, which the Israelites learned from the

^a Gen. xv. 16.

^b See Deu xx. 10-18

^c O.G. p. 275^b.

^d Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible, 210^b.

Canaanites, there was danger lest they should take over also the religious festivals connected with the various agricultural seasons, and thus succumb to the deadly fascination of the sensual nature-worship of the older inhabitants. That this actually happened we learn from the history.”^a

As to the *Asherahs*, there is a doubt which does not in any way affect the main issue. The doubt is merely whether *Asherah* is the name of a distinct goddess, as well as the name of the “poles,” “stumps,” or “stems” which represented her; or whether the notorious “Ashtoreth” (Astarte) was herself worshipped under these obscene images.^b In any case the rites associated with the “*Asherahs*” were immoral.

The “Encyclopaedia Britannica” unhesitatingly designates “*Asherah*” an impure goddess. But even if, as some think, the two names became confused, so that even when *Asherah* is named *Astarte* is ultimately intended, we have only to pass on and give a moment’s attention to the latter to reach the fearful conclusion already indicated.

As to *Astarte* then: “She must have been pre-eminently the goddess of sexual passion. By Greeks and Phoenicians alike she is habitually identified with ‘*Aphrodite*,’ and there are sufficiently definite allusions to the unchaste character of the rites with which she was worshipped.”^c “Her devotees were initiated with impure rites.”^d

From the point of view thus obtained, the passages referred to below slowly unfold their terrible significance.^e

To complete, once for all, the needful reference to this painful and admonitory subject, the student has only to connect the worship of the Golden Calf (Exodus xxxii.) with the Egyptian worship of *Apis*, as briefly disclosed by the “Encyclopaedia Britannica,” to apprehend why, on that occasion, the sedate Moses was driven frantic with consternation; and has only to conceive, in the light of the facts indicated in Numbers xxv. and in this Note, the real nature of the awful snare into which Israel fell at Baal-peor, to apprehend that instant excision alone could be trusted to prevent national extermination.

^a Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible, 210^b.

^b Obscene they manifestly were, as the monumental figures of them plainly enough attest. How readily a “pollard” could be shaped to suggest a conjunction which virtuous shame must ever hide, can well be imagined. And the smallest predominance given to the one or other element would be quite enough to account for the interchange in the usage between the two forms *asherim* (mas.) and *asheroth* (fem.).

^c Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible, 169^a.

^d *Ibid.* 170^a.

^e Lev. xviii. 26-30; xx. 22; Num. xxv. 1-18; Deut. xxiii. 17 (where the discreet reader will please note, by turning to this passage, the result of combining our rendering of the text with plainer terms employed in the footnote appended thereto—“devotee,” sacred person, by profession; in reality, enticing to uncleanness as a part of the service of god or goddess; the prevalence of the custom in the idolatries around, giving need and point to the stern prohibition); 1 K. xiv. 24; xv. 12, 13; xxii. 46; 2 K. xxiii 7; 2 Ch. xv. 16; xxviii. 2; Ps. cvi. 35-38; Isa. lvii. 3-8 (in rendering which, the only doubt in how plain the allusion should be made in the actual words employed in translation; for whether, with Fuerst, we put, for *yádh hazith*, “thou pointest the pin, a periphrasis for the penis erectus,” H.L. p. 430; or, with Cheyene, “when sawest the phallus” P.B. 101; in either case we do but get a glimpse of a monstrous custom prevalent in the East, and not unknown in the West, as a reference to the Greek *phallos* and the Latin *priapus* will at once reveal); Jer. v. 7; vii. 30, 31; xix. 4, 5; xxxii. 33-35; Hos. iv. 12-14; Amos ii. 7-9. This list of passages will serve as a guide to others similar.

A SUGGESTIVE GENEALOGY.

ONE of the greatest charms of the Bible is to be found in its genealogies. Commonly considered to be as dry as dust, it may safely be affirmed that in that dust lie hidden grains of purest gold.

This short Snatch of pedigree, at the end of the Book of Ruth—how rich in suggestiveness it is! Whether by author or by editor appended, the hand that wrote it was guided by the spirit of the entire Old Testament. Boaz points to one who was then yet to come—to David, in the first instance: how much further, remains to be seen. Boaz stands in the line that runs from Perez to David, and behind Perez, of course, stands Judah his father;^a so that we at once span from Judah to David—Judah, the heir of special promises,^b to David the first of a royal line which runs forward into a future which has not ended yet,^c and which cannot end until provision has been made thereby for every thirsty one to partake freely of “the lovingkindness to David well assured.”^d

Boaz brings Ruth into the royal line, and Ruth was a Moabitess—in other words, a Gentile—so that the exclusiveness of Hebrewism is evidently not the only aspect in which it may be viewed. But what power is it that brings this young Gentile widow to dwell in Bethlehem? Plainly, the power of love: on the face of it, love to Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law. But was there not, in that love, a religious strength of conviction and fervour which ennobled the human affection? “Thy God shall be my God,” she said:^e and she is afterwards treated as if she meant it; as if she knew what she was doing, when she came to Bethlehem that she might find “refuge,” from the idol-worship of her native land, “under the wings of Yahweh God of Israel.”^f

Finally, the place is significant. Bethlehem may have been a small city—in fact, a mere village; nevertheless it is known in after times as “the village where David was;”^g and—which is still more significant—the village from which, according to a well-known prediction, was to come forth One greater than David, even He “whose comings forth have been from of old, from the days of age-past time.”^h

And so the outlook widens. As when some traveller, greeting the timely sign-post, makes pause and asks—Whence have I come, and whither am I bound? so the thoughtful reader of the Bible considers the stages by which his journey is advancing:—From Adam, by way of Seth, to Noah; from Noah, by way of Shem, to Abraham; from Abraham, by way of Isaac and Jacob, to Judah; from Judah, by way of Perez and Boaz, to David; and then, will it not be—a road that leads still on, from David to David’s Son and Lord?ⁱ

^a Cp. chap. iv. 12.

^b Gen. xlix. 10.

^c 2 Sam. vii. 12-16; Ps. lxxxix. 19-37.

^d Isa. lv. 1-3

^e Chap. I. 16.

^f Chap. iii. 11, 12.

^g John vii. 42.

^h Micah. v. 2

ⁱ Psa. cx. 1.

SPECIAL NOTE ON THE PSALMS

THE exigencies of space in relation to the varying forms in which this Bible is issued afford a welcome opportunity for inserting here a Special Note on the Psalms, rather than reserve such note for the Old Testament Appendix. It will be necessary to restrict this further outgrowth from the original design of THE EMPHASISED BIBLE to subjects which are in some measure peculiar to the work, leaving the student to seek elsewhere for fuller information on related topics. It will be convenient to treat, first, of some external features which are observable in the foregoing presentment of the Psalms; and, secondly, to touch upon some more essential characteristics of those precious compositions, especially in regard to certain grave questions of interpretation.

I. EXTERNAL FEATURES.

1.—*The division of the Psalms into Books*, having now been familiarised by means of the Revised Version, claims no further notice here than merely to say that the ancient issue of the Psalms in successive and enlarging collections, relieves us from all embarrassment and impulse to prejudgment, when we first find it stated at the end of the Second Book (Psalm lxxii.) that the prayers of David the son of Jesse are “ended,” and yet discover others, later on, attributed to the same author. Just as, in the Book of Proverbs, the first collection (x. to xxiv.) is supplemented by another which, at a later date, “Hezekiah and his men copied out” (xxv. 1), so later editions of the Psalms may very well contain compositions from David’s own pen which at an earlier time had not been brought to light, or hail not been suitably edited for insertion among the hymns employed in the Temple service.

2.—The *titles* of the Psalms need cause us no anxiety. That they are very ancient is evident from their appearance as translated in the Septuagint Version, but further than this we need not go; and if any Psalms, by the application of sound principles of exegesis, remonstrate against the occasion ascribed to them, we need do no more than pay respectful regard to a venerable tradition, and pass on in quest of more conclusive evidence. In particular it should be understood that the preposition generally rendered “of” in the phrase “Psalm of David,” may easily and naturally be rendered “to,” “for” “of,” or “by”—and so may be taken as the “to” of dedication, the “for” of desired use, the “of” of subject-matter, or finally the “by” of authorship—which list can itself scarcely preclude editorial preparation for liturgical use, to say nothing of perils of transcription and transmission, to guard us from which the labours of the textual critic are of such priceless worth. A Psalm “of” Asaph may have been “for” Asaph’s use, or one composed “by” him. We should scarcely think of a Psalm composed “by” the Sons of Korah: much rather “for” their use. And yet one and the same preposition serves in these several applications. An effort has been made in the foregoing version to keep the reader in the enjoyment of his legitimate freedom.

3.—The word *Selah* has long been proof against all endeavours to resolve it. That it literally means “to lift up” has been generally admitted. But “lift up” what?—instruments or voices? And why and how lift up? And so despair has relinquished the inquiry: it was some musical note or sign—precise nature unknown. Others settled down in the conclusion that it simply or chiefly meant “Pause.” And “pause” was nearly successful; save that, to say “pause” at the end of a Psalm, seemed needless. To the Oxford Gesenius belongs the merit of suggesting a more adequate explanation, the substance of which is cited in note [c] to Ps. iii. p. 530, *ante*. As a call upon the people to lift up their voices in praise of Yahweh, a pleasing pause for a practical purpose would be thereby constituted, and one which would suit equally the close of a strophe or the end of a Psalm; and at the same time not be wholly out of place even when it was used to mark a movement of musical rhetoric—interrupting a sentence—a movement akin to the pause for effect familiar in oratory. If the latter part of this explanation be borne in mine, the otherwise unwelcome letting in of a little extra space in connection with some of the occurrences of “Selah” in the foregoing pages, will be explained.

4.—We are thus prepared for the more graphic setting of the word *Hallelujah* (= *Hallelu Yah* = “Praise ye Yah”) than was previously familiar to us; and for which we are indebted to Dr. Ginsburg. *Hallelu Yah* becomes the more general invitation to the people to join: *Selah* the more precise intimation of the points at which the loud acclaim should come in. That the two words are seldom or never found in company, may merely show that, after all, we have only glimpses of the ancient temple worship. At first it may seem a little amusing that by the simple process of resolving the word “hallelujah” into its elements and then translating it in harmony with its force and intent we actually get rid of the word (as one compound word) altogether! That is so; but consider the gain. We not only catch a fresh sight of the ancient worship as a living thing, but we gain an accession to the instances in which the thrice holy Divine Name (in its abbreviated form of “Jah”= “Yah”) occurs in the Old Testament; and, to condescend upon the minor matter of pronunciation, it seems peculiarly becoming that the same translation that ventures upon the spelling “Yahweh” should set free from its almost meaningless combination (often flippantly ejaculated, and sometimes lightly used as a badge) the August syllable Yah. The relation of “Yah” to “Yahweh” is so generally admitted, that to accept the obvious pronunciation of the former and refuse the proposed pronunciation of the latter, would appear to be rather inconsistent.

5.—The *Alphabetical Psalms* claim notice, if only because—the fact that there are such Psalms has in this Bible been forced into prominence by the exhibit in the margin of the Hebrew letters which form this characteristic. It will readily be understood that in some cases these letters have been placed in the right-hand margin merely for convenience, and that they still refer to the first Hebrew word in the line. There are seven such Alphabetical Psalms—namely, xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., and cxlv. To these, some scholars add Psalms ix. and x., which were perhaps originally one Psalm, and in which fragments of the alphabetical arrangement are still discernible. The 119th is the most conspicuous of these singular compositions, both owing to the number of verses headed by each Hebrew letter in succession (eight to each), and to the circumstance that the names of the Hebrew letters are preserved as paragraph headings by the Bibles in common use. The device under consideration may be described as an *abecedarian acrostic*. Eight verses in succession begin (in the original) with words commencing with *aleph*; then eight verses start with words beginning with *beth*; and so on to the end of the alphabet of 22 letters, making 176 verses in all. In the other alphabetical Psalms the arrangement is less formidable; a stanza only, or a distich, or even a single line being headed by each Hebrew letter as the initial of the original word employed. This initialling device makes a singularly striking and beautiful re-appearance in the Book of Lamentations, in which book of five chapters four are alphabetical: Chapters i. and ii. having each a single alphabet, hence twenty-two verses each; Chapter iii., a triple alphabet—three *alephs*, three *beths*, etc.—hence sixty-six verses in all; Chapter iv., a single alphabet and twenty-two verses; Chapter v., still twenty-two verses, but, strange to say, no alphabet. In settling the rendering of Chapter iii., it was found easily possible to conform some four or five triplets to the same style, so far as to begin three verses in succession with the same English letter. Ordinarily, as might be anticipated, the imitation has to be given up; but this small measure of success impressed the present translator’s mind with the conviction that here we have to do with something more than a literary curiosity. There must have been patient devising on the part of the author; and there must have resulted an aid to memory so effective as scarcely to have been outside the original composer’s intention. Truly, a fruitful consideration, bearing on the advantages even now of memorising Holy Scripture, and on the debt of gratitude we owe to paraphrasts and hymn-writers who, by alliteration, rhythm, and rhyme, render aid to the memories of the illiterate, the sick, the blind, and the bookless—aid which tends to keep Divine truth alive in the hearts of men when they most need its influence. Incidentally, the Alphabetical Psalms may yield a valuable lesson in textual criticism. Whoever the author of any one of these Psalms may have been, the intuition comes to us with unanswerable force that if the initial alphabet is nearly unbroken, it must have been originally intended to make it perfect. Hence, when an expert like Dr. Ginsburg says, on Psalm xxv. 2, that

he thinks that instead of "O my God, in thee," it should rather be "In thee, O my God," it needs only that we notice that whereas the former in Hebrew is *Elohay, bekâ*, the latter is *Bekâ, Elohay*, thus perfecting the sequence of the initials by bringing the letter *beth* next after *aleph*, to feel almost certain that he is right. In like manner, when we observe that, while the nineteenth letter (*ḵoph*) is absent, the twentieth letter (*resh*) starts two verses in succession, we cannot avoid the conclusion that a disturbance has at some time or other crept in, even though we cannot now set the matter right; and perhaps just here it may be of no practical consequence, as some nearly synonymous word to that rendered "Behold" in verse 18, but beginning with a *k*, may have originally commenced that sentence. Where, however, the alphabet is complete, we rest content in the assurance that copyists have had a double safeguard against error.

6.—Something has been done in this translation to resolve the individual Psalms into groups of lines, commonly called *strophes*, thereby marking sub-divisions likely to be of practical service, both as indicating changes of tone, topic, speaker, and drift, and as letting in glimpses of that mighty afflatus by which the psalmists were suddenly or gradually carried away into realms of thought and feeling wholly beyond their actual circumstances. It is probable that more might have been done in this direction, even by one individual, had unlimited time and space been at command; but it may in the end be better that studious readers should help themselves by grafting personal labour upon that which here and elsewhere has been prepared to their hand. Where the interjection of "Selah" has occasioned a division which cannot be justified even by a musical imagination, let some small "closing-up" sign be inserted by the student's own hand in the margin. Where, on the other hand, smaller strophes are seen to group themselves into larger divisions, let extra space, at the larger divisions, be in like manner suggested by some appropriate token.

II.—ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS.

It is impossible here to treat of many of the most obvious of these:—the adaptation of the Psalms, by reason of their direct address to Deity, to lift up man's spirit to his Maker; their powerful hold on men's deepest sympathies, in that they are sensitively in touch with a wide range of human sin and sorrow; their prevailing tendency to carry the reader onward out of darkness into light, so that although many of them commence in deepest depths of despair, their ending is mostly on the mountain top of exuberant joy; and, not to go further, the happy blending of personal interests with national and world-wide affairs, so that the piety that begins at home in the privacy of the closet and, it may be, the agonies of a broken heart, is speedily borne on eagle wings to survey the glorious majesty of the Divine Kingdom. On these and other grounds, here left untouched, the lasting popularity of the Psalms securely rests.

A few points, however, not overmuch observed, claim brief remark.

1.—The *dramatic structure* of a good many Psalms makes special demand on interpretative inquiry. Take the Second Psalm as an example. In reading this we listen to no fewer than four distinct voices. There is first (and last) the voice of the Psalmist himself, speaking in his own person, however truly he was led of the Spirit in what he uttered; secondly, the language attributed to the lawless conspirators against Yahweh and his Anointed One; thirdly, the counter declaration of the Most High; fourthly, the record of the Son of God, who in turn cites the terms in which he had been addressed by the Divine Father, counselling him (the Son) to ask for and obtain world-wide dominion; the whole being then concluded, as named above, by the resuming voice of the Psalmist, as timely adviser, counselling the kings and rulers of the earth to act with prudence. It is little to say that the Psalm cannot be expounded in the absence of dramatic feeling and insight: it cannot even be read with fitting expression. Perhaps the most difficult of all the dramatic Psalms is the sixty-eighth, which severely taxes, not the expositor alone, but the translator, who has to determine how to render his descriptive tenses, whether as applying to past, present, or future; and, to decide this, he seems bound to apprehend, as best he may, what is the ideal key-note of the whole

of this magnificent composition. The ground-thought being almost certainly the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, yet how manifestly this concept shrinks into a mere point of departure for a flight into Messiah's coming kingdom, for which the Ascension of the Anointed One into heavenly glory is a stepping-stone—unless indeed our own beloved Apostle Paul is wholly at fault in Ephesians Four.

2.—This feature of dramatic structure naturally leads forward to a deeper question—that of *inspirational prophetic flight into the future*. Were Psalmists and Prophets divinely gifted seers into futurity, or were they not? Were they—as the Apostle Peter affirms they were^a—taken hold of and borne along or carried away out of the present into the future? It may be conceded that to be sent back to the historical starting-points of the prophetic word is well; but to get set fast there is ill indeed. The eagle of prophecy had its nest on the rock of accomplished fact; but to that rock it was not chained. It had a pinion strong enough to bear it up towards the sun, to an elevation from which it could descry things then distant, yea, and things yet to come.

3.—This step emboldens us to take another, landing us in the midst of the problem of *dispensation*. What spirit are we of?—what dispensation are we in? For instance, can we, may we, dare we CURSE as the old Hebrews cursed—as (we might almost say) they were trained to curse? Take Psalm cix. as an example, if you wish to see how whole-heartedly and with what poetry and passion they could execrate their foes. Can *we* curse like that? or are we in duty bound and in spirit empowered to abstain? We know well we must not curse at all.^b But how is that? It is because we have heard a Voice saying, “Bless and curse not”; because we have seen an Example which would put us to shame if we, even on the strongest provocation, dared to “breathe out threatenings and slaughter”; and, finally, because we can never think the command to abstain from cursing arbitrary so long as we realise that we are at present only followers of the Messiah in his humiliation. In this the whole question of dispensation is involved. But the sword of truth is two-edged. The Church—the called-out assembly—of the Messiah cannot curse; but there is another thing she cannot do—at least if rightly guided. She cannot confound herself with the manifested, world-dominating Kingdom of God. The life of the kingdom is in her by faith—that is all: she sees the kingdom at present only from afar. By faith she brings it nigh, it is true; and that is precisely the angle of vision from which she can say and sing the songs of the kingdom which she finds in the Book of Psalms. She leaps over the intervening “strange work” of overthrowing and breaking in pieces. That belongs not to *her*—least of all at present. That commission is safe in immortal and unerring hands. If *we* are ever to join in its execution, it can only be when we have “overcome”;^c and we cannot overcome if we fail meantime to let patience have her perfect work.^d If it might be said without presumption: When Biblical Criticism knows how to make the reasonable distinction—that what is impossible now may be possible hereafter—it may cease torturing humble souls by seeming to say that there are no Predictions of a Personal Messiah in the Old Testament. In any case, it may safely be said: That in proportion as Christians can see their way to judge simply and clearly as to what in the Psalms they may legitimately decline as inapplicable to them; and what in the Psalms they may simply defer, as unfulfilled at present; and so cease to stretch and strain the Word in order to make it suit our intermediate dispensation, to which in the main it does not belong;—so in proportion will they enjoy these admirable lyrics with a refined delight which, probably, they have not hitherto known.

^a 2 Peter I. 21.

^b Mat. x. 43-48; Rom. xii. 14; Jas. iii. 10.

^c Rev. ii. 26, 27.

^d Jas. I. 3, 4.